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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000196

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO, SE ROSS, NEA/MAG, NEA/IR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/06/2029

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SCUL](#) [KISL](#) [IR](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: MOROCCO BREAKS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH IRAN

REF: RABAT 0172

Classified By: A/DCM Craig Karp for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) Morocco announced it had broken diplomatic relations with Iran on March 6, 2009, in a communique from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The communique cited the ongoing diplomatic dispute over Iranian comments about the sovereignty of Bahrain, and noted that Iran had not replied to Morocco's demand for an explanation of Teheran's recent criticism of the Kingdom. The communique, released by official press Agency MAP, also charged that Iran, especially its diplomatic representation in Morocco, had interfered with the Kingdom's Malikite Sunni Islamic religion, which King Mohammed VI, under his title as Commander of the Faithful, presides over.

¶2. (C) MFA Chief of Staff Nasser Bourita confirmed to Polcouns on March 6 that Morocco had formally broken diplomatic relations with Iran. He underscored that the Kingdom had the goods on Iranian Embassy religious interference, implying that Iranians had sponsored (including by financing) unspecified clandestine activity in this realm.

¶3. (C) Comment: Moroccan-Iranian relations have been spiraling downward fast. Embassy will seek to learn more about the exact provocation.

Visit Embassy Rabat's Classified Website;
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

Jackson